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ABSTRACT

The induction of teachers into the organization is a much discussed, but often neglected process. This presentation discusses the reform movement in teacher education and its effect on recruitment of students into the teaching profession; the "common sense" fallacies that guide the beginning teacher and how to cope with those fallacies; and the practical strategies that provide help in teacher recruitment, induction, and retention. Evidence is presented showing that teacher education candidates compare favorably in all areas of academic pursuit with students entering most other professional schools. (Author/JD)

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TEACHER INDUCTION STRATEGIES

Presented at the
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
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by

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TEACHER INDUCTION STRATEGIES

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the elements of an effective teacher induction and retention process. The induction of teachers into the organization is sometimes discussed, but often a neglected process. One of the most important processes in the development of an efficient and effective organization is the induction of personnel.

The key to effective instruction is locating qualified teachers that possess the characteristics necessary to be accepted in the local community and have the instructional skills to deliver content to students in a manageable manner. Teacher recruitment is a prerequisite to an active and effective teacher induction program.

I have divided this presentation into three sections that speak to the topic from different perspectives: First, the reform movement and it's effect on recruitment of students into the teaching profession; Second, fallacies that guide the beginning teachers and how to cope with those fallacies, and; Thirdly, practical strategies that provide help in teacher recruitment and induction.

REFORM MOVEMENT

The reform movement in teacher education, in all it's various forms, has had a serious affect on the recruitment of students into the teaching profession. FOR EXAMPLE, the quality of students entering teacher education programs has long been a concern. Recent reform movements have focused new attention on

the problem while implying that the quality of individuals entering teacher education programs has experienced a marked decline.

What is known about the characteristics of those entering teaching? Several researchers have used the population of the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) as a basis for their research. This data set was based on the high school class of 1972. Conclusions concerning characteristics of students currently entering education based on data gathered over a decade ago is of limited value.

In 1979 Weaver compared those graduating with degrees in education with those obtaining degrees in other subjects. In a ranking of sixteen subject areas by SAT averages, those graduating in education placed fourteenth. Weaver concluded that education was attracting academically inferior students.

In addition, Lyson and Falk analyzed those who defected from teaching as a career choice and those who switched to teaching from another professional career category. They discovered that over 50 percent of those who stated an intention to teach were not employed in a professional or managerial position. They hypothesized that teaching might be identified as a career choice by many high school seniors of limited academic ability because they were unaware of the difficulty in completing a teacher education program. This hypothesis runs counter to the Weaver inference that teacher education programs lack selectivity. Lyson and Falk contend that completion of a teacher education program is not as easy as some critics suggest and is indeed,

screening out those with limited academic ability.

Gallegos and Gibson (1982) used a different approach in attempting to assess the quality of teaching candidates. They compared the high school grade point average, lower division college grade point average and college graduation grade point average of students graduating with degrees in education separated by a decade. Their intent was to determine whether or not there had been a decline in the quality of those choosing education as a major. They selected 150 education graduates from the classes of 1979, 1980, and 1981 and compared them with 149 education graduates from the classes of 1969, 1970, and 1971. After controlling for grade inflation, Gallegos and Gibson found a significant difference between the two groups in favor of the most recent graduates. Their conclusion is exactly the opposite of that claimed in much of the recent literature. They concluded, at least for the university they studied, that the academic qualifications of those choosing education as a major had actually improved in the last decade.

Any conclusions that are drawn must be tempered with a consideration of the limitations of the data presented. There is some indication that education is not attracting the highest quality student. However, it is unlikely that education has ever attracted the top student. The Gallegos and Gibson study indicates that the quality of students choosing education might have actually improved, rather than declined in recent years. There is cause for concern concerning the quality of students entering teaching. Programs designed to improve the quality of

education must address ways of attracting talented students into education. However, the situation does not appear to be as bleak as popular reports indicate. Education is attracting many students of high academic quality. It is important this fact be emphasized. The public impression seems to have been created that all students entering education are of inferior academic quality.

FALLACIES THAT FACE TEACHING

Common sense cannot, and must not, serve as the basis for professional practice, argues Martin Haberman. The problem with common sense is that while there is much experience and expert opinion to support some common sense contentions, other preferred responses are refuted by research. Some common sense is nonsense; and some teachers who are well educated and well intentioned, but professionally untrained, are counter-productive in their efforts to foster students learning.

One common sense fallacy is that teachers who have a strong knowledge base in a discipline and a little background in the principles of learning and instruction can effectively teach youngsters in normal classes.

Another common sense fallacy grows out of the accumulated experience of neophytes functioning in school bureaucracies. Part of being inexperienced is the trauma of learning that all reality, but especially the reality of having to work in highly structured, organized bureaucracies, is inevitably a shock to every thoughtful person.

In the absence of valid, reliable knowledge regarding the

nature of how individuals function in organizations, common sense is frequently wrong. We cannot assume that schools - which are complex, ritualistic, not necessarily rational bureaucracies, controlled by special traditions and peculiar histories, managed by idiosyncratic leaders and pummeled by a variety of uncontrolled external forces - can be understood and managed by simple reason.

Still another example of how common sense may mislead us is in the area of job satisfaction. Common sense tells us that people who are satisfied with their work produce more. Some 3,300 studies conducted between 1930 and 1976, however, lead to the conclusion that there is no direct effect of job satisfaction on productivity.

If there is any relation at all, it is more likely to be from productivity to satisfaction; that is, that high productivity may lead to the attainment of important job values in a particular social setting (Locke, 1976). Similarly, job satisfaction is not directly related to factors such as pay, working conditions, stress, and other factors. We are prone simply to assume that we know their impact on individuals when, in truth, these factors are frequently strained through the bureaucracy and emerge with unpredicted or confounding impact.

If these findings from work situations are applicable to teachers in schools, a teacher's need to be productive may be of primary importance, and the conditions of work that facilitate or impede feelings of productivity might actually be causes, not effects, of job satisfaction. Also, the common solutions now

being advocated (increased salaries, career ladders, and improved professional development), which prove to be most fruitful, may be those that more directly affect productivity rather than perceptions of job satisfaction. Workshops that teach teachers ways to cope with stress, therefore, may increase job satisfaction, but are not the primary solution. Not being able to teach productively may lead to teacher stress and lowered job satisfaction.

Recruiting more able individuals into teaching, however, cannot begin with a focus solely on job productivity. Status and regard for teachers are also important conditions of work.

Common sense, then, is a bad test for evaluating many of the solutions currently being proposed. Higher salaries, more respect, fewer interruptions, more supportive service, few extraneous nonteaching duties, more planning time, and opportunities for continuing education and career development are likely to have a salutary effect on teacher effectiveness (Corrigan, 1981). The great challenge, however, will be to apply any of these obvious improvements to the school bureaucracy and have them not be transformed into an opposite effect.

Beginners without preparation are very likely to relive their own recollections of their own school experiences in an unreflective, ritualistic manner. As negative as the effect of such common sense teaching is for pupils' learning, it is even more disastrous for class discipline and class management. The prepared beginner, engaging in ritualistic behaviors, quickly finds him or herself in a situation where pupils are not learning

as much as they might. Common sense discipline approaches add to a breakdown of order, and a downward cycle is set in motion.

Common sense is an inadequate approach to understanding the workings of the school bureaucracy. Popular solutions for improving teachers' performance (even salary increases) must be carefully worked through in particular school settings to ensure that their actual effects will be positive. Improving the conditions of work may be just as vital as increasing salaries, if raising teacher productivity is the goal.

Finally, beginning teachers, who are unprepared, utilize procedures that reflect their own schooling or that simply seem sensible. Many (if not most) of these ritualistic teacher patterns actually prevent the establishment of a positive classroom environment for pupil learning. There is much experiential and research evidence, therefore, to support the contention that the teaching behavior of well-educated, well-intentioned, but untrained adults is very frequently counterproductive (see, for example, Evertson, Hawley and Zlotnik, 1985).

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER INDUCTION

The teacher shortage is real. The latest report from the National Education Association indicates that 37 states reported a critical shortage in at least one region and at least one curricular area. There are other signs of the broad based nature of this shortage:

In 1972 34% of all Bachelor Degree recipients were prepared to teach. By 1980 this number was 17% and it continues to decline.

The increase in school age population will become significant in 1984 and could approach the peak numbers of the recent "baby boom". In "A Profound Transformation", produced by the American Association of School Administrators, this phenomena is shown to effect the educational enterprise through the year 2000.

There are several other influences that will effect the intensity of the shortage. These are attitudes about teaching, economic conditions and working conditions.

A study of teachers conducted at Sam Houston State University indicates that one out of three are seriously planning to leave the profession. Those who actually left teaching had an average salary of \$14,112 after eleven years of experience. This compares to entry level salaries that average \$20,000 per year in competitive markets. Because of the size of this disparity, teachers have developed a strong negative towards their economic status. As prospective teachers learn of these attitudes they eliminate themselves from teacher preparation programs. Fifty percent less are entering preparation programs than in 1971.

Studies show that working conditions are a great influence on those leaving the profession. Of those who left after one year, only one fourth gave money as the primary reason. Basic reasons cited were lack of support from administrators, teachers and the community and problems in sponsoring extra class activities not related to instruction. Money became more important as years of experience increased, however the feeling of no support permeated all replies. Curiously, when

administrators of these teachers were contacted they felt they had good orientation programs, communicated well with the staff and in general seemed unaware of the problem. The development of a program to protect against this communication breach must be a major part of the retention strategy.

The chance for advancement within the teaching ranks is also a significant negative influence for teachers. It is indeed rare to find a creative promotion system for teachers without them being taken from the classroom. Alternatives other than administration or counseling are being sought by an increasing number of teachers.

Changing economic conditions are also causing concern. We may be developing an apartheid society based on financial ability to pay rather than racial considerations. In times when only a portion of the society can afford to move, the frustration level of those left behind can only increase. It radically changes the only promotion pattern now available to teachers - that of moving from a smaller or "less" prestigious district to a larger or more prestigious district. In this depressed economy it also makes it more difficult for districts to financially support their teachers.

Which classes a first-year teacher is assigned to teach will be extremely influential in how successful a year that teacher is likely to have. Various factors contribute to making a teaching assignment difficult. Among these are overloads--too many different preparations; misplacements--a teacher placed out of his/her field or discipline; classes with a predominance of

low-achieving students or students who are especially difficult to motivate; or classes with extreme diversity in ability levels. Rather than trying to design more elaborate and more powerful induction programs for beginning teachers, perhaps the energy and resources would be better spent in trying to place beginning teachers in teaching settings in which they are more likely to succeed. If beginning teachers are to be assigned to less difficult teaching situations, it will require that experienced teachers be placed in the more challenging assignments. This will require that administrators be willing to make assignments based on the experience and ability of teachers to deal effectively with specific classes. Too often in the past, the "best" classes are given to those teachers with the most seniority and the most difficult classes are assigned to beginning teachers, those who are least prepared to deal with them.

The assignment of an appropriate support teacher is likely to be the most powerful and cost-effective intervention in an induction program. A support teacher who is formally assigned to assist a first-year teacher can contribute greatly to the beginning teacher's success in the first year. However, a number of factors can greatly contribute to the success of this arrangement. These factors include:

a) selecting a highly competent experienced teacher who is willing to serve as a support teacher--it is important that the beginning teacher be provided with an appropriate role model and that the support teacher be willing to devote the time required

to serve in this special role.

b) both teachers teaching in the same discipline with one or more common preparations--this facilitates the teachers in discussing firsthand such matters as actual course content, instructional activities, sequencing and pacing.

c) having the teachers' classrooms located in close proximity to each other--this greatly increases the frequency of contact between both teachers.

d) having a common planning period, if possible--this allows the teachers additional opportunity to work together during the school day.

e) pairing teachers with compatible professional ideologies--many teachers share common or compatible ideologies about teaching and can work well together.

f) pairing teachers with compatible personalities--as in the previous point, the personalities of the vast majority of teachers will be compatible.

Induction programs should be structured flexibly enough to accommodate the emerging needs of participants. An introduction program cannot only address and resolve concerns of beginning teachers, but can also arouse positive concerns that have not yet fully developed.

When these data are viewed collectively it indicates clearly that an evaluation of present strategies for recruiting, orientation and retention of employees should take place. To help in this evaluation a compilation of present practices was made. These were divided into recruitment strategies,

orientation strategies and retention strategies. A synopsis of the collection follows.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Recruitment of effective teachers is a problem that administrators must come to grips with, especially in this era of a declining teacher supply. Administrators in schools must design and implement a plan for teacher recruitment. Schools focus on the following in making their design:

- Friendliness of communities

- Potential for status available in the prospective community

- Enrollments facilitating individual attention to students

- Administrative support for professional growth and development

- Any special self-development opportunities available such as proximities to professional libraries or extended universities

Recruiting Characteristics for Teachers

The key to effective teacher recruiting is encompassed in the ability of the recruiter to locate teachers who possess characteristics which are congruent with the needs of the school. These "ideal characteristics" for many schools may include, but are not limited to, teachers who are:

- Certified and able to teach in more than one subject matter area or grade level

- Prepared to supervise several extracurricular activities

- Able to teach a wide range of abilities in a single classroom

- Able to adjust to the uniqueness of the community in terms of social opportunities, life styles, shopping area, and

continuous scrutiny

The recruitment plan that is implemented by the school administrator will eventually determine the education quality of the school district. The following ideas are practical suggestions used in the development of a recruitment plan:

The easiest and most efficient plan for teacher recruitment involves a competitive salary and extra duty pay schedule. The community is the key to this suggestion and they will determine the part that money will play in the recruiting effort.

A very broad fringe benefit package may be more attractive to prospective teachers than salary.

The district can subsidize the cost of teacher retraining to fit the needs of the school district. This may offer the prospective teacher an additional area of certification.

The district may offer to pay the costs of a teacher earning a master's degree, and in turn, the teacher makes a commitment to teach in the district for three years after receiving the degree.

The district may identify outstanding junior level education majors in the various colleges and universities, select those that meet the district's needs and offer financial assistance in the form of scholarships. This agreement would be contingent upon the student's willingness to sign a letter of commitment to teach in the school district for a specific period of time.

The district may identify and actively recruit outstanding teachers in large districts and prospective teachers that were raised and educated in smaller schools by reminding these individuals of the many benefits they received while growing up in a small town atmosphere. These benefits may include such items as:

A slower pace of living

Smaller class size with an opportunity to get to know each student as an individual

Raising children in a more controlled environment

Opportunities for children to be involved in several extracurricular activities

Paying interview expenses of applicant.

Assist with securing moving loans.

Arranging for interest-free loans before arrival of first paycheck.

The school district could encourage the business community to help by providing summer employment for teachers. If the school recruiter is able to reasonably assure the candidate that summer employment is available in the community, then the candidate is more likely to accept the position. The business sector in the community should welcome the opportunity to hire quality individuals. Using the idea, both the community and the school district receive benefits.

In order to attract effective teachers, it may be necessary to provide employment opportunities for the teacher's spouse. This can be accomplished through a joint effort of the community and the school district. Encourage local employment sources to let the school district recruiter know when they have job vacancies. The school district may fill it's needs for support personnel through the pool of unemployed spouses.

The development of a quality small school depends directly upon the quality of teachers employed. The administrator and board of education districts are primarily responsible for teacher employment. However, the community can provide additional recruitment incentives and should accept some responsibility for a quality educational program. Recruitment must become a joint venture between the community and the school district to be highly effective.

INDUCTION STRATEGIES

An effective orientation program needs a specific set of goals that reflect the needs of new employees. The program must be in tune with the philosophy of the school district. The following goals are basic to a sound orientation program:

1. Establish communication processes within the school and

the district.

2. Make teachers feel welcome and secure.
3. Help teachers become an integral part of the community.
4. Help employees adjust to their work environment.
5. Provide a vehicle for employees to integrate with their colleagues.
6. Provide information about the community.
7. Facilitate the beginning of school year.
8. Provide a continuous (year long) induction program that reinforces these goals throughout the year.

Activities conducted at the beginning of the school year are reasonably consistent. The activities that are missing are those carried on after the Christmas holidays. It has been clearly demonstrated that the key to retaining good teachers is a continuous orientation program throughout the year.

Continuous Induction Activities

- A. Plan special inservices to be held throughout the year dealing with topics specifically directed toward beginning teachers. These are planned to dovetail with the pre-school orientation activities.
- B. New teachers are supervised so as to accomplish two goals. Regular (weekly at least) contacts by administrators and supervisors are used to open communication lines and to identify problems as soon as possible. In addition the barriers to communication between teachers and principals are consciously lowered so teachers will more readily share their true feelings. Through these types of exchanges the expectations of the school can be more clearly delineated.
- C. Formal evaluation of the beginning teacher orientation program is carried on regularly. This process should provide clues to effectiveness of the program and provide suggestions for improvement. Both an oral discussion and written evaluations should be used.
- D. Schedule a session in January for teachers and administrators who are in their first year in the school. Topics should include any changes since school started, plans for the remainder of the year and a re-emphasis of goals. Time should be spent giving feedback about how the staff is doing and for allowing the staff to discuss problems.
- E. Plan year long series of social activities that allow the staff to get to know each other and interact with other on a non-school basis.

STRATEGIES FOR RETENTION

A major problem is retaining the effective teacher in the school system. In order to accomplish this, school districts need to develop a plan to achieve this goal. The following ideas are practical suggestions for maintaining effective teachers schools:

Direct Impact Activities

The school administrator needs to develop a close working relationship with churches, civic organizations, and other community support systems in order to encourage these groups to include teachers in their membership. In some instances community groups in smaller school districts are closed to outsiders (i.e. teachers). If teachers feel they are part of the community, then they are more likely to want to continue their employment.

Schools can strive to provide or encourage the community to provide recreational opportunities for teachers. This can take the form of transportation to area athletic events, summer softball leagues, fishing, and boating trips. This may include arranging transportation for group travel, for ski trips, sightseeing tours, or possible trips overseas. Members of the community would be welcome to participate in these activities. The community school, in conjunction with landowners and lending agencies, could make the purchase of property available to teachers who choose to buy land. If teachers have some ownership in the area, they are more likely to become a permanent citizen of the area.

Long Range Growth Activities

Placing effective teachers in leadership positions has several advantages. Leadership positions contribute to professional growth as well as personal growth. Teachers see the rewards of more autonomy, more freedom, and growth of their knowledge as being as important as increased pay. The prestige of position usually translates to community prestige, thereby doubling the effect. Some strategies that districts are now using include the following:

Initiating intra- or inter-district temporary faculty exchange programs.

Establishing inservice incentive systems including release time, college credit, and certificate renewal.

Providing special challenges or assignments, particularly when affiliated with pre- or inservice programs.

Initiating stress reduction activities ranging from desensitization to "venting", social functions, and physiological stress reduction exercises: and establishing local support systems for continuous stress reduction.

The suggestions outlined in the preceding sections form a springboard from which to implement many types of creative ideas for recruiting effective teachers. The school district, in concert with the community, can influence the educational quality by actively seeking and retaining effective teachers. Basic to this process is a commitment from the school and the community to provide sufficient resources, especially time and money, to successfully carry out the program. Lack of the commitment usually dooms the project. Once the commitment is made, the venture is limited only by the creativity of the district and its patrons. This monograph should provide the seeds to allow creative imagination to grow and prosper, culminating significant improvement in the teaching and learning process of the district's schools.

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